

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is Building Bridges all about?

We are a community-driven nonprofit that equips young people with communication and leadership skills to transform divides. Youth learn to listen, connect, and confidently lead to make positive change in their communities. We have been doing this work for 25 years, and have over 2000 alumni living around the world.

Participants in our programs gain awareness about themselves, form relationships across various communities, and build skills to talk about what divides them. In particular, we address issues such as power and privilege along lines of race, class, gender, religion, sexual orientation, culture, and other identities.

What should I expect from the Summer Intensive?

Through interactive workshops, indoor and outdoor experiential learning activities, creative projects, and dialogue, participants learn new communication techniques and develop leadership skills. Activities promote critical thinking about the ways divisions, stereotypes, and discrimination influence us. Participants have the opportunity to confront and deeply examine difficult issues from a variety of perspectives. And we also include plenty of fun and free time!

What will the school year be like?

Following the Summer Intensive, participants return home to continue their work and find ways to share what they've learned. Throughout the school-year, youth come together each month for Home Group to deepen their learning, continue dialogues, and strengthen their new relationships. In addition, we have two weekend retreats (one in the Fall and one in the Spring). A final component is to design and implement an individual or group Change Project with specific goals as the program year comes to an end.

What skills should participants expect to gain from Building Bridges?

- Authentic relationship-building skills within and across identities
- Communication skills that improve their ability to self-express, listen, and empathize
- Critical thinking and leadership to address issues through goal-oriented projects
- Coping skills and self-efficacy for stressful situations including conflict

Can you accommodate language and other requests?

We recognize the many different learning styles, gifts, and needs of participants and strive to deliver workshops and activities to meet this diversity. *Please note that **all program components are conducted in English.*** Translation/interpretation may be provided based on need and available resources, including for family meetings and orientation.

Additionally, Building Bridges recognizes participants' diversity as related to disability, medical need, gender identity, dietary, and religious practices. During the application process and/or

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RAEGAN QUATTLEBAUM, PROGRAM COORDINATOR
303-856-6125 | RAEGAN@BUILDINGBRIDGESSHIFT.ORG

upon acceptance, please discuss specific requests with program staff. We are committed to inclusive programming and will work to make accommodations wherever possible.

What are the costs associated with this program?

All Building Bridges participants are offered a **full scholarship to cover the program expense** of \$3,500 per participant. This means that your family does **NOT** pay a program fee in order for you to participate. During the program year, participants may have the opportunity to support Building Bridges' fundraising efforts. Also, individuals and families are encouraged to make a contribution to the program that is meaningful to them. This may be a financial donation. Or families may choose to contribute in different ways, like helping out with meals, supplies, volunteering, or transportation.

I have submitted my application. What happens next?

You will be contacted by phone or email to let you know we've received your application. Also, your parent/guardian is welcome to schedule a separate in-person or phone appointment with Building Bridges' Program Coordinator to discuss the program further if needed.

Next, you will be contacted regarding a possible interview with members of our recruitment team. After an interview for those offered one, you will receive notice of whether or not you have been accepted into the program.

If you are selected, you will receive an acceptance packet with additional information, forms, and the date options for an orientation session to prepare you and your parent/guardian (or other supportive adult) for the summer intensive and your program participation.

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